3.17 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The proposed cogeneration facility would be located on land within Whatcom County zoned for Heavy Impact Industrial Use. The facility site is also located within the Cherry Point Major Industrial Urban Growth Area/Port Industrial Zone defined in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Construction and operation of the facility and ancillary infrastructure would be consistent and compatible with existing zoning, land uses, plans, and ordinances within the Cherry Point Major Industrial Urban Growth Area. Although the land within the project vicinity was historically used for agricultural purposes, much of it has been used for industrial purposes for the past 30 years. The proposed short-term use of the area's natural resources would be in accordance with state and federal resource agencies' permit conditions.

Construction of the entire project would result in short-term impacts and uses of natural resources to produce 720 MW of long-term electrical power to the Pacific Northwest, and electrical power and steam to the BP Cherry Point Refinery. Short-term construction effects would potentially include the generation of construction jobs, noise, particulate air pollution, and local inconvenient traffic conditions. Short-term soil erosion and water quality impacts also may result during and shortly after construction, although mitigation measures would be carried out to minimize these impacts. In the long term, the use of water from the Nooksack River would not represent a change in the quantity of water withdrawn from the river. Water that was piped to the Alcoa Intalco Works would now be piped to the cogeneration facility. In addition, the expected retirement of three older steam boilers within the refinery would result in a net reduction of air pollutants released from the refinery.

The cogeneration facility site would be committed for the life of the proposed project, but would be restored as described in a site restoration plan to be prepared by the Applicant and approved by EFSEC.

To the extent the short-term (30 years) operation of the proposed project would contribute to the possibility of a long-term increase in global warming from the release of greenhouse gases, the project would have a potential effect on long-term productivity. As long as the Applicant owns and operates the cogeneration facility, greenhouse gas emissions from the cogeneration facility would be offset by the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from other Applicant-owned operations worldwide. If, at some time in the future, the Applicant sold the cogeneration facility, mitigation for the greenhouse gas emissions would be as follows:

- The proposed CO_2 emission standard would be 0.675 pounds CO2/kWh calculated on the basis of cogeneration fuel charged to power in Btu/kWh.
- Emissions in excess of the emission standard would be mitigated either by: (1) an annual payment to a qualifying organization such as the Climate Trust of $0.57/ton CO_2, or (2) greenhouse gas reductions obtained by the cogeneration owner, or (3) a combination of the two.
- Mitigation would be satisfied annually for 30 years, which is the assumed economic life of the proposed project. Mitigation would be reported to EFSEC on an annual basis.

The emission of greenhouse gases from the cogeneration facility is discussed in Section 3.2 Air Quality.

The use of natural and other resources would result in the generation of electrical energy, which could enhance the petroleum industry's productivity in the Pacific Northwest and the local and regional economy. With the exception of wetland impacts, the short-term use of environmental resources is projected to have minor adverse impact on the long-term viability of the environmental resources in the project vicinity.